

Message Text

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TO USMISSION NATO

S E C R E T STATE 065854

FOR AMBASSADOR WITMAN (HOLD FOR ARRIVAL)

FOLL SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO ADDIS ABABA NAIROBI ROME FROM
MOGADISCIO 29 MAR 73 REPEATED TO YOU QUOTE

S E C R E T MOGADISCIO 0434

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR MILI SO ET KE

SUBJ: POSSIBLE INSURGENCY IN THE OGADEN

REF: MOGADISCIO 411

1. IN DISCUSSION MARCH 24 AND 27, ITALIAN MILATT HAD SOME
INTERESTING OBSERVATIONS ON ETHIOPIAN DEFENSE PLANNING TO
SUPPLEMENT REFTEL REPORT.

2. ON BASIS HIS RECENT CONVERSATIONS WITH IEG MILITARY IN
ADDIS, HE THOUGHT ETHIOPIANS WERE PRIMARILY CONCERNED BY LIKE-
LIHOOD OF SOMALI NON- CONVENTIONAL INSURGENCY- TYPE OPERATION
IN OGADEN. HOWEVER, ETHIOPIANS WERE NOT RULING OUT SURPRISE
SWEEP INTO OGADEN BY SOMALI MILITARY WHO WOULD THEN QUICKLY
ATTEMPT TO OBTAIN IEG MILITARY RETALIATION (FOR WHICH THEY
UNPREPARED) BY CALLING FOR CEASE- FIRE AND OAU OR OTHER DIP-
LOMATIC MEDIATION. MILATT SAID ALTHOUGH HE PERSONALLY CON-
VINCED SOMALIS HAD NO INTENTION OF RESORTING TO OFFENSIVE MILITARY
ACTION AGAINST ETHIOPIANS, HE THOUGHT IT JUST POSSIBLE THAT
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SOMALIS CAPABLE OF MOVING TANKS SOME DISTANCE INTO OGADEN
AS ONE- TIME THRUST.

3. ON OTHER HAND, HE FELT ETHIOPIANS WERE MAKING A GREAT
DEAL OF TROUBLE FOR THEMSELVES BY REINFORCING THEIR MILITARY
UNITS IN OGADEN. HE CITED PRIMITIVE BUSH CONDITIONS WHICH MADE
IT MOST DIFFICULT ESTABLISH AND SUPPLY NEW MILITARY UNITS
WITHOUT ENGENDERING MORE ILL WILL FROM SOMALI RESIDENTS IN OGADEN.
FOR EXAMPLE, THERE WERE ONLY SO MANY WELLS AND THEIR CAPACITY
WAS LIMITED. IF ETHIOPIAN UNITS MOVED IN AND TOOK OVER SCARCE
WATER SUPPLY, LOCAL INHABITANTS WOULD BE FURIOUS; ARMED
RESISTANCE COULD EASILY OCCUR WITHOUT INSTIGATION OR COORDI-
NATION BY GSDR. COMMENT: WE THINK THIS IS IMPORTANT POINT.
THERE RECENT SFR REPORT THAT ETHIOPIANS INTEND TO UTILIZE
CONVENTIONAL FORCES TO CONTAIN ANY RISE IN INSURGENCY IN
OGADEN. GSDR LEADERS HAVE TOLD US OF PRESSURES THEY RECEIVING
FROM SOMALIS IN OGADEN WHO CLAIM THAT THEY ARE BEING GIVEN
EXTREMELY ROUGH TIME BY IEG AUTHORITIES (MOG 0397). IN WAKE
OF INCREASED ETHIOPIAN MILITARY PRESENCE DEEPER IN OGADEN,
COMPLAINTS BY SOMALI TRIBESMEN OVER REAL OR IMAGINED
DIFFICULTIES IN ACCESS TO WATER, FOOD, ETC. LIKELY TO INCREASE.
LOORAM UNQUOTE ROGERS

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